



City of Pomona

Cultural Arts Commission

Draft Action Minutes

Chairperson Lisa Soiseth
Vice-Chairperson Nancy Tessier
Commissioner Jovani Esparza
Commissioner Angel Arellano
Commissioner Dianna Batts
Commissioner Christian Ornelas
Commissioner Aida Lugo

May 20, 2026

3:02 PM

dA Center for the Arts

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Lisa Soiseth called the Cultural Arts Commission meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. at the dA Center for the Arts.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Lisa Soiseth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Lisa Soiseth
Vice-Chairperson Nancy Tessier
Commissioner Jovani Esparza
Commissioner Angel Arellano
Commissioner Aida Lugo
Commissioner Christina Ornelas
Commissioner Dianna Batts

Absent:

Staff Present: Ata Khan, Deputy Director of OEBA
Jocelyn Ayala, AIPP Program Manager
June Ku, AIPP Program Coordinator

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Commissioner Esparza announced that the LA County fair is wrapping up.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Action Minutes from the Cultural Arts Commission Meeting of April 27, 2026.

Commissioner Batts shared that she couldn't attend the April meeting as her online link was faulty.

A motion by Commissioner Ornelas, seconded by Commissioner Esparza, carried by a unanimous vote of the members present (7-0-0-0) to approve the April 27, 2026 Action Minutes.

Chairperson Soiseth – yes; Vice-Chairperson Tessier – yes; Commissioner Ornelas – yes; Commissioner Batts – yes; Commissioner Lugo – yes; Commissioner Esparza – yes; Commissioner Arellano – yes.

IN OPPOSITION: None

IN SUPPORT: None

DISCUSSION TIME: 1 minute (3:04 p.m. to 3:05 p.m.)

PUBLIC HEARING

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Discussion on *The Cesar Chavez Suite Murals*

Staff recommended the approval of the proposed alterations by Artist Paul Botello that remove depictions of Cesar Chavez from *The Cesar Chavez Suite Murals*. Deputy Director Khan posed questions for Artist Paul Botello to answer regarding the proposed alterations. Botello shared his reactions to the news, discussions with Mayor Sandoval about alterations, and his background as a public artist with a focus on community and education.

The proposed alterations are as follows:

Mural 1 - Cesar Chavez as a child: Remove Cesar Chavez as the central figure and replace him with a Chicano youth dressed in Zoot suit attire to celebrate cultural pride in moments of cultural tension.

Mural 2 - Cesar Chavez serving in the Navy: Remove Cesar Chavez and alter the left figure to a woman and right figure to a Filipino individual to represent their influences in the

farmworkers' movement.

Mural 3 - Cesar Chavez leading a march: Remove Cesar Chavez as the left side figure and replace him with Professor Jose Z. Calderon and a student on a march from Pomona to LA City Hall. Add a female student for more female representation.

Mural 4 - Cesar Chavez as an adult: Remove Cesar Chavez as the central figure and replace him with a rendering of an unknown farm worker to represent farmworkers as a whole.

Mural 5 - Cesar Chavez's legacy: Remove Cesar Chavez on the right side of the mural and replace his likeness with that of Dolores Huerta.

Artist Botello stated that the murals will have 4 coats of This Stuff Works for UV and graffiti protection, and Nova paint will be used for its long-lasting quality. Botello stated that the shared budget of \$6,500 was a "lowball".

Chairperson Soiseth asked if renaming the park has been brought up, to which Deputy Director Khan responded that the park renaming and mural alteration are two separate processes. Commissioner Tessier supported the alterations and asked if the murals are currently faded, to which Artist Botello responded that they are not as they were recently repainted after being graffitied.

Commissioner Arellano disapproved of the specific inclusion of Jose Calderon and Dolores Huerta and advocated for the inclusion of more general portrayals of people and also asked for the added woman in Mural 2 to be more feminine. Commissioner Lugo recommended including someone in a cap and gown. Artist Botello suggested also referencing Homeboy Industries. Artist Gary Lett expressed support for Artist Botello's efforts.

A motion by Chairperson Soiseth, seconded by Commissioner Lugo, carried by a vote of the members present (6-1-0-0) to approve the proposed alterations to *The Cesar Chavez Suite* murals.

Chairperson Soiseth – yes; Vice-Chairperson Tessier – yes; Commissioner Ornelas – yes; Commissioner Batts – yes; Commissioner Lugo – yes; Commissioner Esparza – yes; Commissioner Arellano – no.

IN OPPOSITION: None

IN SUPPORT: None

DISCUSSION TIME: 66 minutes (3:05 p.m. to 4:11 p.m.)

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Program Manager Ayala presented that the public art registry is being updated and Pomona Go is highly encouraged for those who have public art concerns they'd like to report. Ayala also shared that the Art in Public Places newsletter has a clickthrough rate of 63%, which is significantly higher than the average benchmark clickthrough rate for government emails which

is around 20%.

ADJOURNMENT

The Cultural Arts Commission meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Lisa Soiseth at 4:18 p.m. to the next regular meeting of June 22, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Prepared by,

Jocelyn Ayala
Cultural Arts Commission Secretary

June Ku
Program Coordinator